

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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R 202006Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2535

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 22366

EXDIS

FOR THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR
IRWIN

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: MY CALL ON PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING ON
SEPTEMBER 19 AT 1600.

SUMMARY: DURING A 45 MINUTE TETE-A-TETE FAREWELL CALL
ON GISCARD D'ESTAING SEPT 19 THE PRESIDENT WAS CORDIAL
AND CANDID. MY REGRET AT LEAVING FRANCE WAS TEMPERED,
I TOLD THE PRESIDENT BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT MY
SUCCESSOR, AMBASSADOR RUSH, WAS A MAN OF WIDE
EXPERIENCE, WISDOM AND ABILITY. THE PRESIDENT SAID
HE DID NOT KNOW AMBASSADOR RUSH PERSONALLY BUT HAD
HEARD EXCELLENT REPORTS OF HIM FROM FONMIN
SAUVAGNARGUES. HE SAID HE REGRETTED THAT WE HAD NOT
MET MORE OFTEN DURING HIS GOVERNMENT'S SETTLING-IN
PERIOD AND HAD BEEN PLANNING TO INCREASE OUR CONTACTS.
HE HOPED HE AND AMBASSADOR RUSH COULD EXCHANGE VIEWS
FREQUENTLY. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRESIDENT OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING
THAT HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING PRESIDENT FORD
AND WORKING WITH HIM IN THE FUTURE.

2. I TOLD PRESIDENT GISCARD THE U.S. APPRECIATED
THE NEW ATMOSPHERE IN FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, THE
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OPENNESS OF HIS ADMINISTRATION AND THE INCREASED

OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE SINCE HE TOOK OFFICE. IF THESE TRENDS COULD BE CONTINUED AND REINFORCED, BOTH FRANCE AND THE U.S. WOULD PROFIT. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT ARE TAKING A NEW LOOK AT A NUMBER OF ISSUES. HE IMPLIED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE LIMITS BECAUSE OF DOMESTIC OPINION AND POLITICS, BUT LEFT OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE IN THE FUTURE AS CONDITIONS CHANGE. HE COMMENTED THAT FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS NATO, FOR EXAMPLE, IS SENSITIVE BECAUSE OF THE PAST. IT IS NEITHER DESIRABLE NOR POSSIBLE TO CHANGE FRENCH POLICY REGARDING AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR FORCE, BUT THERE ARE TECHNICAL AREAS AND RELATIONSHIPS REGARDING NATO WHERE NEW APPROACHES CAN BE DEVELOPED. THE THRUST OF THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ON DEFENSE WAS THAT BETTER FRANCO-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION WILL BE POSSIBLE AS LONG AS FRANCE DOES NOT APPEAR TO DEPART DRAMATICALLY AND IMMEDIATELY FROM THE DE GAULLE-POMPIDOU LEGACY. HE SPOKE OF THE DESIRABILITY OF THE U.S.'S REFRAINING FROM SPEAKING PUBLICLY OF CHANGES IN FRANCE'S NATO POLICY; IT WAS PREFERABLE TO SPEAK OF IMPROVEMENT IN MUTUAL COOPERATION.

3. ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, GISCARD SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS NOT FOND OF SUMMIT MEETINGS IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE CURRENT WORLD-WIDE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO REQUIRE ATTENTION AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS. HE WILL BE INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THIS WITH PRESIDENT FORD, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY WORLD-

WIDE INFLATION. HE THOUGHT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND HIMSELF AT SOME POINT. HE SPOKE WITH A NOTE OF REGRET THAT THE BRITISH WERE IN NO POSITION ENGAGE IN A HELPFUL DIALOGUE. I SAID I KNEW THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD BE INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING SUCH A PROPOSAL WITH HIM.

COMMENT: GISCARD DID NOT MAKE A CONCRETE PROPOSAL FOR AN INFORMAL THREE-WAY SUMMIT BUT MY IMPRESSION WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT HE HAD GIVEN THE IDEA SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT.
END COMMENT.

4. THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT THAT INFLATION AND SPIRALLING ENERGY COSTS WERE AT THE ROOT OF THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS LED HIM TO THE SUBJECT OF ENERGY. WITHOUT DIRECTLY CRITICIZING THE PREVIOUS

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2536

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 22366

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FRENCH GOVERNMENT HE SAID HE FELT THAT "PERSONALITIES" MIGHT HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE INITIAL FRENCH-US-EUROPEAN APPROACH TO THE ENERGY CRISIS. HE ADDED THAT THE FAULT LAY NOT ENTIRELY ON THE FRENCH SIDE BECAUSE THERE APPEARED TO BE ELEMENTS OF HIGH-HANDEDNESS IN THE U.S. APPROACH TO THE WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE AND HE EVEN HEARS AN OCCASIONAL CRITICISM TODAY FROM SOME OF THE EUROPEANS NOW PARTICIPATING. BUT IT IS CLEAR TODAY, HE CONTINUED, THAT NONE OF THE CONSUMER COUNTRIES CAN EXPLOIT A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ARABS OR HOPE TO DRAW UNILATERAL ADVANTAGE FROM THE ENERGY SITUATION. HE IMPLIED COOPERATION ON ENERGY, LIKE DEFENSE, IS AN AREA WHERE FRANCE WOULD LIKE TO BE MORE FORTH-COMING WITHIN LIMITS.

5. I REPLIED THAT THERE SEEMED TO ME THREE BROAD ASPECTS TO THE ENERGY CRISIS AND THE EUROPEAN REACTION TO IT. FIRST, THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT ITSELF: WE HOPED, AS WE KNOW THE EUROPEANS HAD SAID, THAT EUROPEAN INITIATIVES WOULD NOT COMPLICATE THE SEARCH FOR A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. FRANKLY, THERE HAD BEEN SOME CONCERN ABOUT CERTAIN EUROPEAN INITIATIVES ON THIS SCORE. SECONDLY, THERE IS THE OVERALL ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ARAB STATES. CONTRARY TO THE SUSPICION HELD IN SOME FRENCH CIRCLES, THE U.S. FAVORS AND WELCOMES POLITICAL

AND TIES AND OVERALL GOOD RELATIONS

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BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ARAB STATES. WE RECOGNIZE THAT IT MAKES NEITHER POLITICAL NOR ECONOMIC SENSE FOR THE U.S. TO BE ALONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THIRDLY, THERE IS THE OIL CRISIS PER SE. WHILE OUR IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS MAY DIFFER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE OIL SHORTAGE POSES DIRECT AND INDIRECT PROBLEMS WHICH CAN ONLY BE SOLVED COOPERATIVELY. AS FRANCE HAD BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF THE U.S. IN CERTAIN AREAS, WE TOO HAVE HAD CONCERN THAT FRANCE AND EUROPE MIGHT TRY TO REACH A UNILATERAL SOLUTION. WE THOUGHT SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD NOT BE CONSTRUCTIVE.

6. WITH RESPECT TO THE ISRAEL-ARAB DISPUTE, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE HAD TALKED TO A NUMBER OF ARAB LEADERS, PARTICULARLY FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND THE EMIRATE STATES, AND HAD COME AWAY CONVINCED THAT RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS THE CRITICAL ELEMENT IN AN OVERALL SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. PROGRESS IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS OR SINAI IS IMPORTANT, OF COURSE, BUT NO LASTING PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED UNTIL THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IS SATISFACTORILY DISPOSED OF. HE FELT THAT ALL THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING FRANCE AND THE U.S., SHOULD BE PREPARED TO WORK TOGETHER TO THIS END. HE ADDED THERE MIGHT BE ROOM FOR BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE U.S. ON ENERGY AND OIL BUT CAUTIONED AGAIN THAT APPEARANCES AND PROCEDURES WERE IMPORTANT. HE SAID FOR THIS REASON HE GREATLY VALUED THE PRIVATE APPROACH ENVISAGED IN THE FORTHCOMING MEETINGS ON OIL IN WASHINGTON.

7. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT HOW RELIEVED AND HAPPY MY GOVERNMENT WAS WITH THE DENOUEMENT OF THE KIDNAPPINGS IN THE HAGUE. GISCARD SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN CLEAR EARLY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 22366

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TERRORISTS THAT THEY WERE NOT EAGER TO LOSE THEIR LIVES AND THE BASIS FOR A BLOODLESS SOLUTION SEEMED POSSIBLE. THE FRENCH HAD THEREFORE MOVED SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY. THE FRENCH ARE OF COURSE RELIEVED AND CONTENT WITH THE OUTCOME. WHILE THE TERRORISTS ACHIEVED THEIR OBJECTIVE OF FREEING THEIR COLLEAGUE FROM JAIL IN FRANCE, THEY ACHIEVED LITTLE ELSE. I TOOK THE OCCASION (MAKING IT CLEAR THAT I WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY) TO SAY THAT I HOPED HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THEIR POLICY REGARDING INTERNATIONAL MEASURES AGAINST TERRORISTS. GISCARD GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF LISTENING SYMPATHETICALLY BUT WITHOUT SPECIFIC COMMENT OR COMMITMENT.

8. COMMENT: IN THIS MEETING, AS IN OTHERS I HAVE HAD WITH GISCARD, THE PRESIDENT WAS CORDIAL AND GENEROUS WITH HIS TIME. HE IS CLEARLY INTERESTED IN THE U.S., KNOWS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT US, AND IS COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING ISSUES WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS. HE INDICATED THAT HE FOLLOWS EVENTS IN AMERICA AS CLOSELY AS TIME PERMITS AND READS SEVERAL AMERICAN WEEKLY NEWS MAGAZINES. HE HAD SUCH INFORMATION AS THE CURRENT WHOLESALE PRICE INDEX AND RATE OF INFLATION IN THE U.S. AT HIS FINGER-TIPS. HE SAID THAT MADAME GISCARD D'ESTAING WOULD ATTEND A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR AMBASSADOR WATSON ON SEPTEMBER 20 AT THE AMERICAN CATHEDRAL IN PARIS, A MOST GRACIOUS CONFIDENTIAL

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GESTURE FOR WHICH I EXPRESSED DEEP APPRECIATION. GISCARD'S BASIC FRIENDSHIP FOR AND INTEREST IN THE U.S. IS A MAJOR ASSET IN FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE RESPOND OVER THE COMING

MONTHS, IN EFFECT OUR "STYLE", WILL BE AN IMPORTANT
FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS NOT ONLY
WITH FRANCE BUT EUROPE.
IRWIN

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